

I CLAIM:

W3A

1. A structural element for enclosing or supporting hot operating machinery, comprising:

- (a) a structural member for enclosing or supporting a hot operating machinery; and
- (b) means defining a plurality of micro-cavities on the outer surface of said structural member for mitigating ignition of a flammable liquid that comes into contact with said structural member, said micro-cavities being sized to minimize seepage of the liquid into said micro-cavities because of the surface tension of the liquid.

2. The structural element of claim 1 wherein said micro-cavities are in the form of holes of selected shape defined in the surface of said structural member.

3. The structural element of claim 1 wherein said micro-cavities are in the form of grooves defined in the surface of said structural member.

4. The structural element of claim 2 wherein the centerline of said holes is non-perpendicular to said surface of said structural member.

5. A structural element for enclosing or supporting hot operating machinery, comprising:

- (a) a structural member for enclosing or supporting a hot operating machinery; and
- (b) a porous sintered coating on said structural member defining a plurality of micro-cavities in the surface of said coating for mitigating ignition of a flammable liquid that comes into contact with said coating, said micro-cavities being sized to minimize seepage of the liquid into said micro-cavities because of the surface tension of the liquid.